IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A light coupling apparatus for coupling a linear diode laser array to an optical fiber, said light coupling apparatus comprising:

a wedge-shaped coupling element including an input surface and an output surface, said coupling element having a height (h) substantially equal to a length defined by said linear diode laser array, and said coupling element having a length (L) extending from [[an]] said input surface and to [[an]] said output surface[[,]];

wherein said input surface ~~receiving~~ receives emitted light directly from a plurality of diode lasers within said linear diode laser array, said input surface ~~having~~ has a first width (w1) facetted in a direction along [[the]] said height (h) to direct said light towards said output surface having a second width (w2), and said input surface ~~being~~ is curved in a direction perpendicular to said height (h) to substantially collimate said light.

2. (currently amended) The light coupling apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first width (w1) is greater than or equal to said second width (w2).

3. (currently amended) The light coupling apparatus of claim 2, wherein said second width (w2) is substantially equal to a diameter of said optical fiber.

4. (currently amended) A method of coupling the output of a linear diode laser array into an end of an optical fiber, said method comprising the steps of:

directly optically coupling along a linear axis spaced at a ~~first distance (d1)~~ distance (d) from said linear diode laser array a wedge-shaped coupling element having a height (h) substantially equal to a length defined by said linear diode laser array, said coupling element receiving emitted light directly from a plurality of diode lasers within said linear diode laser array and directing said light toward an output surface having a second width (w2) by way of an input surface having a first width (w1) facetted in a direction along said height (h) and curved in a direction perpendicular to said height (h); and

optically coupling light from said output surface and into an end of the optical fiber, said optical fiber having a diameter substantially equal to said second width (w2).

5. (currently amended) [[A]] The method ~~according to~~ of claim 4, wherein said first width (w1) is greater than or equal to said second width (w2).

6. (currently amended) A light coupling apparatus for coupling a linear diode laser array to an optical fiber, said light coupling apparatus comprising:

a cylindrical lens positioned adjacent and substantially parallel to the linear diode laser array, said cylindrical lens having a length substantially equal to a length of [[the]] said linear diode laser array, said cylindrical lens receiving emitted light from a plurality of diode lasers within said linear diode laser array and collimating said light; and

a wedge-shaped coupling element situated between said cylindrical lens and said optical fiber, said coupling element including an input surface and an output surface, said coupling element positioned adjacent said cylindrical lens for thereby receiving collimated light directly from said cylindrical lens via said input surface, said coupling element having a length (L) extending from [[an]] said input surface and to [[an]] said output surface, said coupling element having a height (h) and said input surface having a radius of curvature along [[a]] said height (h), said height (h) being substantially equal to said length of said cylindrical lens ~~length~~, said coupling element tapering from said input surface and to said output surface, said input surface having an associated first width (w1) and said output surface having an associated second width (w2), [[the]] said first width (w1) being substantially equal to a diameter of said cylindrical lens, and [[the]] said second width (w2) being substantially equal to a diameter of said optical fiber.

7. (currently amended) The light coupling apparatus of claim 6, wherein said first width (w1) is greater than or equal to said second width (w2).

8. (currently amended) The light coupling apparatus of claim 6, wherein said cylindrical lens has a cross section that is circular, elliptical, or hyperbolic ~~cross-section~~.

9. (currently amended) The light coupling apparatus of claim 6, wherein said length (L) of said coupling element ~~length (L)~~ is approximately [[10mm]] 10 millimeters (mm), and said first width (w1) and said second ~~widths~~ width (w2) are each approximately 1 to 3 [[mm]] millimeters (mm).

10. (currently amended) The light coupling apparatus of claim 6, wherein said cylindrical lens is at a first distance (d1) from said linear diode laser array, [[and]] said input surface of said coupling element is at a second distance (d2) from said cylindrical lens, and ~~wherein~~ said first distance (d1) ~~and second distances are~~ is substantially equal to said second distance (d2).

11. (currently amended) The light coupling apparatus of claim 6, wherein said radius of curvature of said input surface of said coupling element ~~input surface~~ is configured to minimize reflection of received light from interior sides of said coupling element.

12. (currently amended) The light coupling apparatus of claim 11, wherein said length (L) of said coupling element ~~length (L)~~ and said height (h) of said input surface ~~height (h)~~ of said coupling element are configured such that an angular spread of light within said coupling element matches an acceptance angle of said optical fiber.

13. (currently amended) A lighting apparatus comprising:

a linear diode laser array comprising a plurality of spaced-apart diode lasers each emitting divergent laser light;

a cylindrical lens positioned at a first distance (d1) from and substantially parallel to [[the]] said linear diode laser array, said cylindrical lens having a length substantially

equal to a length defined by said plurality of diode lasers, said cylindrical lens receiving emitted light from said plurality of diode lasers and collimating said light; and

a wedge-shaped coupling element having an input surface and an output surface, said coupling element positioned at a second distance (d2) from said cylindrical lens for thereby receiving collimated light directly from said cylindrical lens via said input surface, said coupling element having a length (L) extending from [[an]] said input surface and to [[an]] said output surface, said coupling element having a height (h) and said input surface having a radius of curvature along [[a]] said height (h), said height (h) being substantially equal to said length of said cylindrical lens ~~length~~, said coupling element tapering from said input surface and to said output surface, said input surface having an associated first width (w1) and said output surface having an associated second width (w2), [[the]] said first width (w1) being substantially equal to a diameter of said cylindrical lens; and

an optical fiber adjacent said output surface of said coupling element, said second width (w2) of said output surface of said coupling element being substantially equal to a diameter of said optical fiber.

14. (currently amended) The ~~light coupling~~ lighting apparatus of claim 13, wherein said first width (w1) is greater than or equal to said second width (w2).

15. (currently amended) The ~~light coupling~~ lighting apparatus of claim 13, wherein said cylindrical lens has a cross section that is circular, elliptical, or hyperbolic ~~cross-section~~.

16. (currently amended) The ~~light coupling~~ lighting apparatus of claim 13, wherein said length (L) of said coupling element ~~length (L)~~ is approximately [[10mm]] 10 millimeters (mm), and said first width (w1) and said second ~~surface widths~~ width (w2) are each approximately 1 to 3 [[mm]] millimeters (mm).

17. (currently amended) The ~~light coupling~~ lighting apparatus of claim 13, wherein said first distance (d1) ~~and second distances are~~ is substantially equal to said second distance (d2).

18. (currently amended) A method of coupling the output of a linear diode laser array into an end of an optical fiber, said method comprising the steps of:

optically coupling along a linear axis spaced at a first distance (d1) from said linear diode laser array a cylindrical lens having a length substantially equal to a length defined by said linear diode laser array, said cylindrical lens receiving emitted light from a plurality of diode lasers within said linear diode laser array and collimating said light;

directly optically coupling the collimated light from said cylindrical lens and into a wedge-shaped coupling element having an input surface and an output surface, said coupling element positioned at a second distance (d2) from said cylindrical lens and having a length (L) extending from [[an]] said input surface and to [[an]] said output surface, said coupling element having a height (h) and said input surface having a radius of curvature along [[a]] said height (h), said height (h) being substantially equal to said length of said cylindrical lens ~~length~~, said coupling element tapering from said input surface and to said output surface, said input surface having an associated first width (w1) and said output surface having an associated second width (w2), [[the]] said first width (w1) being substantially equal to a diameter of said cylindrical lens; and

optically coupling light from said output surface of said coupling element and into an end of the optical fiber, said optical fiber having a diameter substantially equal to said second width (w2).

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, wherein said first width (w1) is greater than or equal to said second width (w2).

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, wherein said cylindrical lens has a cross section that is circular, elliptical, or hyperbolic ~~cross-section~~.